Mr. Jos. Sam.l Gunnel 58 #15

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Jan.y 1. 1820

J. Chapman

Sam.l Gunnel Virg.a

admitted March 16th 1820 –

Dysentery

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In selecting a subject for an Inaugural Dis=
=sertation, I am not unaware of the expectation of
something new; but the limits which are put
to the experiments & practice of Students render
it impossible for them to add any thing of
importance to medical science; except, so
far as relates to their making use of the rem=
=edies recommended to them by their Preceptors.
They can merely state how far they have
found them usefull or otherwise.

Having some opportunities of practice on
patients labouring under the disease called
Dysentery, I shall therefore select that disease,
as the subject of my Inaugural Dispertation.

Doctor Cullen says, "this is a disease in
which the patient has frequent stools accom=
=panied with much griping and followed by tenesmus.
The stools, though frequent are generally in small
quantity, and the matter voided is chiefly mu=
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=cous, sometimes mixed with blood. At the same time the natural feces seldom appear, and when they do, it is generally in a com=
=pacted and hardened form."

This disease is common to armies and navies and places where a number of per=
=sons are kept confined, for a length of time. Though, it sometimes prevails as an epidemic, and occasionally with intermittent and remittent fevers, and ~~it~~ is frequently complicated with them. It is said by some to be contagious, by others not so, unless it be of the typhus type.

This disease that came under my notice prevailed as an epidem=
=ic in the neighbourhood of the Great=
=Falls of Potomac River, in Fairfax Coun=
=ty, Virginia. It bore very much the bilious type.

It occurred early in July 1819 and pre=

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=vailed untill the early part of September following.

This disease most commonly came on with chillines and head-ache, which was succeded by nausea, high fever, pain in the bowels, frequent mucous and bloody stools, and occasionally green and black offensive stools. After a few days, the patient discharged a quantity of matter, which appeared like white meat that had been beaten or mashed into small pieces; at other times small round balls or lumps, about the size of a hickory-nut, somewhat resembling suet. These discharges were fre=
=quently attended with and succeeded by a discharge of bloody water, not unlike the washings of fresh meat. At this time, the patient complained of great tormina and tenesmus, soreness of the abdomen and a peculiar wretch=
=edness.

× It was seldom necessary to repeat this remedy if used in the early stage.

× It was occasionally necessary to repeat this remedy.

× It very frequently took double and sometimes three times the ordinary dose to act.

Called to a patient in the early stage of this disease, I generally took from twelve to ~~twenty~~-five ounces of ~~of~~ blood, or bled untill the most prominent ~~symptoms~~ and distresing symptoms were releived. This in many instances, had such a powerful ef=fect in releiving pain, spasm, and redu=cing febile action, that the patient would for a short time appear, as if his relief would be effectual; but this was not uniformly the case.

Shortly after the measureable re=lief of the patient by bloodletting, whether those disagreeable symptoms recurred again or not; I followed it by an emetic of Specac=uanha and Tartar Emetic in combination; with which I thoroughly evacuated the stomach. The strong impression made upon the stom=ach by the emetic, had a great tendency to the surface, and seemed to act as an

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anodyne to all the local affections. though there were many patients who took two or three times the ordinary dose to act upon them. Many of whom, discharged large quantities of bile; and others chiefly phlegm, but generally, the stronger the impression upon the stomach, the greater was the relief of the local affections.

So soon as the patient's stomach was composed after the operation of the emetic, I administered a large cathartic con=sisting of not less than from twenty to thirty grains of Calomel; if that did not operate in a few hours, I directed the patient should take from twenty to for=ty grains of Rhubarb or Jalap.

The Calomel would generally operate, (it being much assisted by the Ipecacuanha and Tartar Emetic that had been previously taken) This most commonly produced large dischar=

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=ges of bile and other feculent matter, which was offensive in the extreme. The relief of the patient from this operation was very considerable.

In the early part of the prevalence of this disease, after I had exhibited reme=
=dies to the extent above stated: I gave Castor oil, Glauber's Salts or Senna & Salts; all of which were so disagreeable, that there were not more than one patient in five or six, that could keep them on their stomachs; and they, generally with considerable difficulty.

To remedy this evil, I for a while made use of the Jalap or Rhubarb in pills with considerable benefit; occasion=
=ally using Opium to releive pain; but being dipatisfied with this remedy from the continuance of the disease, I determin=
=ed to make use of that invaluable remedy

× ℞ Opium iv. grs., Ipecacuanha viij. grs. & Calomel × vj. grs. mixed and made into ~~into~~ eight pills (I had on some occasions to make use of Rhubarb or Jalap instead of the Calomel in the above recipe) Dose, one pill every two or three hours.

× I generally made use of Injections of Castor Oil, Glauber Salts, fresh butter &c. to assist the cathartic medicines.
I also used Laudanum as an anodyne injection & Opium as a suppository occasionally

or combination of medicine recommended by the Professor of the practice; which consists of a combination of Opium, Ipecacuanha and Calomel. This acted in a threefold manner; as an anodyne, diaphoretic & cathartic.

By exhibiting this in pills, once every two or three hours, the patient's cure generally progressed rapidly; but where the first evacuations had not been sufficient, or the disease much more obstinate than common, I found it necessary greatly to increase the quantity of Calomel in each pill; sometimes to the amount of six or eight grains (this would not generally be necessary for more than from two to four times) this would discharge the balance of the irritating matter; and add greatly to the relief of the patient.

Soon after commencing the use of the combination of Opium, Ipecacuanha and

x In some cases, I had about a yard and a half of flannel wapt around the patient and made fast with thread or pins; which was much more easy to apply, than the narrow roller, and appeared to answer nearly all its purposes.

x The combination of Opium, Ipecacuanha and Calomel was continued after the application of the roller

Calomel, if the symptoms were not great=
=ly relieved; I applied a flannel roller around
the abdomen and breast, which extended
from the pubis to the arm-pits. The patients
=frequently would in a very short time,
after the application, speak of the great
comfort that he received from it.

There were a few cases, in which, I was
unable to induce the patient to wear
the flannel roller, in consequence of the
great itching it produced on the parts
to which it was applied: these patients
frequently wore a cotton roller or common
large handkerchief around the abdomen with
considerable advantage.

The roller is truly a great and valu=
=able remedy, it removes local torpor, pain,
langor, tenesmus and other bad symptoms; it
gives strength to the patient, and adds
greatly to his comfort. Previously to the

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application of the roller, I have heard patients complain of great pain and soreness; when they moved or turned; to use their own expressions; that "their bowels seemed to be rubbing or scraping against each other". After the application of the roller the patient could move, or turn himself without much difficulty; the affection of the bowels being so much relieved.

If the roller did not produce the entirely desired effect or where the patient would not suffer it to remain, I found it necessary to apply a large blister to the abdomen; from the powerfull impression, which this produced so near the seat of the disease; the patient experienced such beneficial effects, as to render his state of convalescence speedy. I consider this last remedy one of the most

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valuable of our science, in this disease.

I now tender you my unfeigned thanks for the advantages that I have derived from your several lectures: and conclude this unembellished statement of facts, so fully sensible of its imperfections that in submitting it, I have only to add that nothing short of the necessity imposed and the reliance that I have on the liberality and candour of the body to whose inspection it is to be subjected could ~~have~~ force me to have exposed it.

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